

Research Committee Meeting
Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission

Minutes

Date: Friday, June 26, 2020
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Location: **Webex Meeting**

Attendance:

Commissioners: Roger Davidson, Tim Baker, Marshall Stevenson, Jr., David Fakunle, Iris Barnes
MDLTRC Staff: Kristin McFarlane
MD State Archives Staff: Maya Davis, Chris Haley, Emily Squire, Elaine Bachmann
Public: Lawrence Roberts, Denise Meringolo, Matthew McKnight, Linda Duyer
(one unidentified call-in?)

Collection Process

- Davis reported that the final edits are being made to the website for the collection process. It will be a 2-step process. The first step will collect the name of the individual and the kind of information that they want to donate. A form will then be sent to the individual to complete step 2 – sending in the information. If it can be placed online the item will be available to the public (everything will not immediately go on the web without vetting – and some things may not be able to go online). Individuals may also make appointments to drop off items at the archives

Working with Coalitions

- Klugh reviewed commissioner assignments to county coalitions. Asked that commissioners take a proactive approach in participating with coalitions and coordinating research efforts
- Research Committee members on coalitions: Baker & Klugh (Howard and Montgomery), Stevenson (Somerset), Barnes (Baltimore, Harford, Cecil), Armenti (Carroll and Frederick), Davidson (Alleghany, Southern Maryland – Calvert, St. Mary’s), Chavis (Lower Eastern Shore – Wicomico and Worcester), Barrett (Prince George’s)
- (Will also need to connect with commissioners assigned to Anne Arundel and Upper Eastern Shore)

Action Items

- Connect with local coalitions

Oral History interviews

- Chavis suggested that we begin the process of conducting virtual oral history interviews as soon as mid-July. The priority is to conduct interviews with descendants and relatives of victims, and local historians.

- Klugh stated that coalitions can be helpful in identifying potential interviewees.
- Chavis suggested using the Tulsa OK Commission model
- Davis – will upload the document about Tulsa to the Research Committee Google drive and will add the link to our “Resources” page on the website. (we should all review the document)

Action Items

- Review Tulsa document as a model for our approach to oral history

Communications and Follow Up

Letters sent

- Every County Historical Society
- Maryland Historical Society
- Nabb Center, Salisbury University
- Baltimore City Historical Society (This entity does not hold records but does research)
- HBCUs Libraries (Morgan State, Bowie State, Coppin State, UMES)
- Johns Hopkins Library
- Enoch Pratt Free Library
- Frostburg State University

*Potential entities to reach out to

- Moreland Spingarn (Howard University)
- Library of Congress
- Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture (SMAAHC) – Chavis noted that some relevant artifacts exist in their holdings – can possibly embed links leading from our website to relevant photos
- Naval Academy

Action Items

- Chavis is preparing a communication to send to States Attorney’s offices where lynching took place
- Necessary to identify specific holdings/items for digitization. Commissioners assigned to specific regions/lynching cases where repositories are located can take the lead in communicating with individuals representing those entities

Dr. Denise Meringolo – Director of Public history at UMBC

- Meringolo discussed a potential opportunity to involve fall 2020 public history graduate students in assisting the research efforts of the commission. The specific class is always organized around a real-world issue. This could also lead to students potentially staying engaged with the work beyond the semester. Preference would be for students to focus on individuals/events relating to Baltimore County or Baltimore City based work.
- ***Action Item*** - Discuss how UMBC Public History students can assist the work of the commission

Potential assistance in researching federal records

- Fakunle – read email from individual inquiring about volunteer opportunities with the commission. The individual has experience with the Federal Judiciary and has a research and data analysis background. The skillset of this individual can support the commission’s research efforts.

Dr. Matthew McKnight – Chief Archaeologist – Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)

- McKnight discussed the use of Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and its potential relevance for identifying suspected burial sites of lynching victims (ex. George Peck-Montgomery County) in cases where oral history, newspaper accounts, or other data provide an approximate location of burial). GPR can detect a prior disturbance but cannot positively identify a specific individual.
- Klugh commented that it will be important to make sure that we have a record of the burial sites for all of the lynching victims
- Haley asked about potential fees for engaging MHT GPR services
- McKnight stated that this kind of work would be considered “in service to the state” and would not necessitate funding unless there was considerable travel expense associated with accessing the site
- Can contact MHT MDLTRC member Elizabeth Hughes, or McKnight directly.
- Also discussed “Medusa” (Maryland’s Cultural Resource Information System), the repository for the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (architectural and archaeological sites)
- <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/>
- ***Action Item*** - Identify potential cases/sites for GPR detection

Research Status Reports as a standard agenda item in future meetings

- Davis suggested that a standard part of all future Research Committee meetings include reports from individual commissioners about the status of their research and work with local coalitions. This will help to inform the public concerning what we have accomplished and the work that is occurring.
- Klugh agreed to make this a standard agenda items for future meetings.

Announcements

- Chavis announced a Monday, June 29, 2020, 6:00pm Zoom conversation, “Dinner with Dr. Peniel Joseph, Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy, University of Texas at Austin – free registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mondays-in-june-zoom-dinner-with-dr-peni-el-joseph-tickets-109876377202>

- Chavis stated that the discussion with Dr. Joseph will revolve around recent news concerning monuments and the confederate flag.

Adjournment (12:15pm)